

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BOSH AND THE KEY."

CHAPTER XVI. DOUBTS.

I HAVE been searching all this morning in vain for a sheet of written note-paper: almost grown yellow by time, when I last saw it.

It contains three stanzas of very pretty poetry. At least I once thought so. I was curious to try, after so many years, what I should think of them now. Possibly they were not even original, though there certainly was no lack in the writer of that sort of cleverness which produces pretty verses.

I must tell you how I came by them. I found that afternoon a little note, on the window-stool in our tea-room, addressed "Miss Ethel."

Laura Grey did not happen to be in the room at the moment. There might have been some debate on the propriety of opening the note if she had been present. I could have no doubt that it came from our guest, and I opened and read it instantly.

In our few interviews I had discovered, once or twice, a scarcely disguised tenderness in the stranger's tones and looks. A very young girl is always pleased, though ever so secretly, with this sort of incense. I know I was. It is a thing hard to give up; and after all, what was Mr. Carmel likely to know about this young man; and if he did know him, what were the canons of criticism he was likely to apply? And whatever the stranger might be, he talked and looked like a gentleman; he was unfortunate, and for the present dependent, I romantically thought, on our kindness. To have received a copy of verses was very pleasant to my girlish self-importance; and

the flattery of the lines themselves was charming.

The first shock of Mr. Carmel's warning had evaporated by this time; and I was already beginning to explain away his note. I hid the paper carefully. I loved Laura Grey; but I had, in my inmost soul, a secret awe of her; I knew how peremptory would be her advice, and I said not a word about the verses to her. At the first distant approach of an affair of the heart, how cautious and reserved we grow, and in most girls how suddenly the change from kittens to cats sets in.

It was plain he had no notion of shifting his quarters to the hotel. But a little before our early tea-hour, Rebecca Torkill came in and told us what might well account for his not having yet gone to Cardyllion.

"That poor young man," she said, "he's very bad. He's lying on his back, with a hankercher full of eau-de-cologne on his forehead, and he's sent down to the town for chloroform, and a blister for the back of his neck. He called me in, and indeed, though his talk and his behaviour might well be improved, considering how near he has just bin to death, yet I could not but pity him. Says he, 'Mrs. Torkill, for Heaven's sake don't shake the floor, step as light as you can, and close the shutter next the sun,' which I did; and says he, 'I'm in a bad way; I may die before morning. My doctor, in town, tells me these headaches are very dangerous. They come from the spine.' 'Won't you see Doctor Mervyn, please, sir?' says I. 'Not I,' says he. I know all about it better than he—they were his words—and if the things that's coming don't set me to rights, I'm a gone man.' And indeed he groaned as he might at parting of soul and body—and

here's a nice kettle o' fish, if he should die here, poor, foolish young man, and we not knowing so much as where his people lives, nor even his name. 'Tis a mysterious thing o' Providence to do. I can't see how 'twas worth while saving him from drowning, only to bring him here to die of that headache. But all works together, we know. Thomas Jones is away down at the ferry; a nice thing, among a parcel o' women, a strange gentleman dying on a sofa, and not a man in the house! What do you think is best to be done, Miss Grey?"

"If he grows worse, I think you should send for the doctor, without asking his leave," she answered. "If it is dangerous, it would not do to have no advice. It is very unlucky."

"Well, it is what I was thinking myself," said the housekeeper; "folks would be talking, as if we let him die without help. I'll keep the boiler full in case he should want a bath. He said his skull was fractured once, where that mark is, near his temple, and that the wound has something to do with it, and by evil chance, it was just there he got the knock in the wreck of the Conway Castle; the Lord be good to us all."

So Mrs. Torkill fussed out of the room, leaving us rather uncomfortable; but Laura Grey, at least, was not sorry, although she did not like the cause, that there was no reason to apprehend his venturing out that evening.

Our early tea-things came in. A glowing autumn sunset was declining; the birds were singing their farewell chorus from thick ivy over branch and wall, and Laura and I, each with her own secret, were discussing the chances of the stranger's illness, with exaggerated despondency and alarm.

Our talk was interrupted. Through the window, which, the evening being warm, and we, secure from intrusion, had left open, we heard a clear, manly voice address us as "Miss Ethel and Miss Grey."

Could it be Mr. Carmel come back again?

Good Heavens! no; it was the stranger in Mr. Carmel's place, as we had grown to call it. The same window, his hands, it seemed, resting on the very same spot on the window-stone, and his knee, just as Mr. Carmel used to place his, on the stone bench. I had no idea before how stern the stranger's face was; the contrast between the features I had for a moment expected, and

those of our guest revealed the character of his with a force assisted by the misty red beam that glanced on it, with a fierce melancholy, through the trees.

His appearance was as unexpected as if he had been a ghost. It came in the midst of a discussion as to what should be done if, by ill chance, he should die in the steward's house. I can't say how Laura Grey felt; I only know that I stared at his smiling face for some seconds, scarcely knowing whether the apparition was a reality or no.

"I hope you will forgive me; I hope I am not very impertinent; but I have just got up from an astounding headache all right again; and, in consequence, in such spirits, that I never thought how audacious I was in venturing this little visit until it was too late."

Miss Grey and I were both too much confounded to say a word. But he rattled on:

"I have had a visitor since you were so good as to give me shelter in my shipwrecked state—one quite unexpected. I don't mean my doctor, of course. I had a call to-day much more curious, and wholly unlooked for; an old acquaintance, a fellow named Carmel. I knew him at Oxford, and I certainly never expected to see him again."

"Oh! You know Mr. Carmel?" I said, my curiosity overcoming a kind of reluctance to talk.

"Know him? I rather think I do," he laughed. "Do you know him?"

"Yes," I answered; "that is, not very well; there is, of course, a little formality in our acquaintance—more, I mean, than if he were not a clergyman."

"But do you really know him? I fancied he was boasting when he said so." The gentleman appeared extremely amused.

"Yes; we know him pretty well. But why should it be so unlikely a thing, our knowing him?"

"Oh, I did not say that." He still seemed as much amused as a man can quietly be. "But I certainly had not the least idea I should ever see him again, for he owes me a little money. He owes me money, and a grudge beside. There are some men you cannot know anything about without their hating you, that is, without their being afraid of you, which is the same thing. I unluckily heard something about him—quite accidentally, I give you my honour, for I certainly never had the pleasure of knowing him intimately. I don't

think he would exactly come to me for a character. I had not an idea that he could be the Mr. Carmel who, they told me, had been permitted by Mr. Ware to reside in his house. I was a good deal surprised when I made the discovery. There can't have been, of course, any inquiry. I should not, I assure you, have spoken to Mr. Carmel had I met him anywhere else; but I could not help telling him how astonished I was at finding him established here. He begged very hard that I would not make a fuss about it, and said that he was going away, and that he would not wait even to take off his hat. So, if that is true, I shan't trouble any one about him. Mr. Ware would naturally think me very impertinent if I were to interfere."

He now went on to less uncomfortable subjects, and talked very pleasantly. I could see Laura Grey looking at him as opportunity occurred; she was a good deal further in the shade than I and he. I fancied I saw him smile to himself, amused at baffling her curiosity, and he sat back a little further.

"I am quite sorry, Miss Ware," he said, "that I am about to be in funds again. My friends by this time must be weaving my wings—those wings of tissue-paper that come by the post, and take us anywhere. I'm awfully sorry, for I've fallen in love with this place. I shall never forget it." He said these latter words in a tone so low as to reach me only. I was sitting, as I mentioned, very much nearer the window than Laura Grey.

There was in this stranger for me—a country miss, quite inexperienced in the subtle flatteries of voice, manner, looks, which town-bred young ladies accept at their true value—a fascination before which suspicions and alarms melted away. His voice was low and sweet; he was animated, good-humoured, and playful; and his features, though singular, and capable of very grim expression, were handsome.

He talked to me in the same low tone for a few minutes. Happening to look at Laura Grey, I was struck by the anger expressed in her usually serene and gentle face. I fancied that she was vexed at his directing his attentions exclusively to me, and I was rather pleased at my triumph.

"Ethel, dear," she said, "don't you think the air a little cold?"

"Oh, I so very much hope not," he almost whispered to me.

"Cold?" said I. "I think it is so very sultry, on the contrary."

"If you find it too cold, Miss Grey, perhaps you would do wisely, I think, to sit a little further from the window," said Mr. Marston, considerably.

"I am not at all afraid for myself," she answered, a little pointedly, "but I am uneasy about Miss Ware. I do think, Ethel, you would do wisely to get a little further from that window."

"But I do assure you I am quite comfortable," I said, in perfect good faith.

I saw Mr. Marston glance for a moment with a malicious smile at Laura Grey. To me the significance of that smile was a little puzzling.

"I see you have got a piano there," he said to me, in his low tones, not meant for her ear. "Miss Grey plays, of course?"

"Yes; very well indeed."

"Well, then, would you mind asking her to play something?"

I had no idea at the time that he wanted simply to find occupation for her, and to fill her ears with her own music, while he talked on with me.

"Laura, will you play that pretty thing of Beethoven's that you tried last night?" I asked.

"Don't ask me, Ethel, dear, to-night; I don't think I could," she answered, I thought, a little oddly.

"Perhaps, if Miss Grey knew," he said, smiling, "that she would oblige a poor shipwrecked stranger extremely, and bind him to do her any service she pleases to impose in return, she might be induced to comply."

"The more you expect from my playing, the less courage I have to play," she said, in reply to his appeal, which was made, I fancied, in a tone of faint irony, that seemed to suggest an oblique meaning; and her answer, I also fancied, was spoken as if answering that hidden meaning. It was very quietly done, but I felt the singularity of those tones.

"And why so? Do, I entreat—do play."

"Shouldn't I interrupt your conversation?" she answered.

"I'll not allow you even that excuse," he said; "I'll promise (and won't you, Miss Ware?) to talk whenever we feel inclined. There, now, it's all settled, isn't it? Pray begin."

"No, I am not going to play to-night," she said.

"Who would suppose Miss Grey so resolute; so little a friend to harmony? Well, I suppose we can do nothing; we can't prevail; we can only regret."

I looked curiously at Laura, who had risen, and was approaching the window, close to which she took a chair and sat down.

Mr. Marston was silent. I never saw man look angrier, although he smiled. To his white teeth and vivid eyes his dark skin gave marked effect; and to me, who knew nothing of the situation, the whole affair was most disagreeably perplexing. I was curious to see whether there would be any sign of recognition; but I was sitting at the side that commanded a full view of our guest, and the table so near me, that Laura could not have introduced her chair without a very pointed disclosure of her purpose. If Mr. Marston was disposed to snarl and snap at Miss Grey, he very quickly subdued that desire. It would have made a scene, and frightened me, and that would never do.

In his most good-humoured manner, therefore, which speedily succeeded this silent paroxysm, he chatted on, now and then almost whispering a sentence or two to me. What a contrast this gay, reckless, and, in a disguised way, almost tender talk, presented to the cold, peculiar, but agreeable conversation of the ascetic enthusiast, in whom this dark-faced, animated man of the world had uncomfortably disturbed my faith!

Laura Grey was restless all this time, angry, frightened. I fancied she was jealous and wounded; and although I was so fond of her, it did not altogether displease me.

The sunlight failed. The reflected glow from the western sky paled into grey, and twilight found our guest still in his place at the window, with his knee on the bench, and his elbows resting on the window-stone, our candles being lighted, chatting, as I thought, quite delightfully, talking sense and nonsense very pleasantly mixed, and hinting a great many very agreeable flatteries.

Laura Grey at length took courage, or panic, which often leads in the same direction, and rising, said quietly, but a little peremptorily:

"I am going now, Ethel."

There was, of course, nothing for it but to submit. I confess I was angry. But it would certainly not have been dignified to show my resentment in Mr. Marston's presence. I therefore acquiesced with careless good humour. The stranger bid us a reluctant good-night, and Laura shut down the window, and drew the little bolt across the window-sash, with, as it seemed to me, a rather inconsistent parade of

suspicion. With this ungracious dismissal he went away in high good humour, notwithstanding.

"Why need we leave the drawing-room so very early," said I, in a pet.

"We need not go now, as that man is gone," she said, and quickly closed the window-shutters, and drew the curtains.

Laura, when she had made these arrangements, laid her hand on my shoulder, and looked with great affection and anxiety in my face.

"You are vexed, darling, because I got rid of that person."

"No," said I; "but I'm vexed, because you got rid of him rudely."

"I should have prevented his staying at that window for a single minute, if I had been quite sure that he is the person I suppose. If he is—oh! how I wish he were a thousand miles away."

"I don't think you would be quite so hard upon him, if he had divided his conversation a little more equally," I said with the bluntness of vexation.

Laura hardly smiled. There was a pained, disappointed look in her face, but the kindest you can imagine.

"No, Ethel, I did not envy your good fortune. There is no one on earth to whom I should not prefer talking."

"But who is he?" I urged.

"I can't tell you."

"Surely, you can say the name of the person you take him for?" I insisted.

"I am not certain; if he be the person he resembles, he took care to place himself so that I could not, or, at least, did not, see him well; there are two or three people mixed up in a great misfortune, whom I hate to name, or think of; I thought at one time I recognised him; but afterwards I grew doubtful. I never saw the person I mean more than twice in my life; but I know very well what he is capable of; his name is Marston; but I am not at all certain that this is he."

"You run away with things," I said. "How do you know that Mr. Carmel's account may not be a very unfair one?"

"I don't rely on Mr. Carmel's account of Mr. Marston, if this is he. I knew a great deal about him. You must not ask me how that was, or anything more. He is said to be, and I believe it, a bad, selfish, false man. I am terrified when I think of your having made his acquaintance. If he continues here, we must go up to town. I am half-distracted. He dare not give us any trouble there."

"How did he quarrel with Mr. Carmel?" I asked, full of curiosity.

"I never heard; I did not know that he was even acquainted with him; but I think you may be perfectly certain that everything he said about Mr. Carmel is untrue. He knows that Mr. Carmel warned us against making his acquaintance; and his reason for talking as he does, is simply to discredit him. I dare say he'll take an opportunity of injuring him also. There is not time to hear from Mr. Ware. The only course, if he stays here for more than a day or two, is, as I said, to run up to your papa's house in town, and stay there till he is gone."

Again my belief in Mr. Marston was shaken; and I reviewed my hard thoughts of Mr. Carmel with something like compunction. The gloom and pallor of Laura's face haunted me.

OVERWORK ? OR OVERWORRY ?

A GREAT amount of very pernicious twaddle has lately been published on the subject of the alleged overwork in which many of the greatest, and possibly some of the least, men of the present generation indulge in the pursuit either of wealth and fame, or of high social position. The tendency of these publications has been to unpopularise and discourage labour, and to exalt the doctrine that the true duty of a man to himself in these days, is to do as little as he can for the largest possible reward. Such teaching is highly mischievous, and if generally practised would speedily send the world back again into the barbarism from which it is not too rapidly emerging. Work is divine. Without work, human life would be intolerable, and a man would be little better than a sponge, an oyster, or a limpet upon the rock, which only exist to imbibe the nourishment that they are too imbecile or too powerless to seek. But like all the abundant blessings spread around mankind, work is only beautiful and good in its degree. It must be used, and not abused. Too much of anything is not good for us. Vice itself is but virtue degenerated and dissipated by being forced into extremes. Ferocity is nothing but excess of courage. Extravagance is but excess of liberality. Penuriousness is but excess of prudence. Anarchy is but over much liberty. Cowardice is but excess of caution and the inordinate desire of self-preservation. Jealousy springs from the excess of love. Rashness is but another name for excess of bravery, and

stagnation is but rest, when carried to the ne plus ultra of its possibility. In like manner, work, if not carried beyond the point at which all the functions of mind and body are exercised without undue strain upon either, is one of the greatest, if not the very greatest of all the blessings that are showered upon the human race. Carried beyond this point, it degenerates into toil, and takes more out of nature than it puts in. But—if we are to believe some of our modern teachers who moralise upon the melancholy death of the late estimable Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, whose overwrought nervous system was the propelling cause which induced him to lay violent hands upon himself—work is a thing which in our age brings the best and wisest of us prematurely to death, and is alike the symbol and the punishment of the overstrained mental activity of our day. *Vox et preterea nihil!* Windy blethers, uttered by men who have given no proper thought to that of which they write, and who are at the best blind leaders of the blind, or parrots who repeat words without knowledge!

There is far too great a predisposition in all countries to look upon labour as something inflicted upon man as a curse for his disobedience, to interpret literally, and not according to the spirit, the penalty laid upon Adam, and to take advantage of the misinterpretation to shirk labour altogether, or to impose it unduly upon the weaker. This doctrine requires not only discouragement, but disproof; for the inevitable result of its adoption would be either to reduce men to the state of savages, when the only labour undertaken would be that of the chase of wild animals, or the capture of birds and fish to provide food for the sustenance of life; or the establishment of slavery, when none but slaves would work upon the compulsion of their lords and masters. But work looked upon with the eye of reason, is the choicest advantage of our mortal state, the only motive power that keeps not only men, but the solar system, and all the countless orbs of the boundless universe which God has made, in a condition of healthy and progressive perpetuity. And the greatest men in all ages and countries have always been the greatest workers. It is only the poor, weak physical natures that break down amid their work—creatures whose loss to the world is no loss, but a gain. The average duration of human life is scarcely fifty years, and its almost extreme natural limit

has been declared, on the highest authority, to be three score years and ten; but if we search the history and biography of the most illustrious men of all ages, who have done most for the benefit and improvement of their kind, we shall find that nine of ten out of them have exceeded sometimes by a decade or more of happy long life their less industrious and less gifted fellow-strugglers.

If we would know the length of days attained by the great thinkers and workers of Greece and Rome, we have only to turn to the ever-attractive pages of Plutarch's *Lives* for the gratification of our curiosity, where we find that Solon, Lysurgus, Plato, Socrates, Sophocles, and other lights of the ancient world, all obtained a green old age. Among the moderns, men who lived in the comparatively recent time since the invention of the benignant art of printing, or who have but recently passed away from among us, it will be found that those who have done the most and the hardest intellectual work have lived long: whether their work was that of the statesman, the soldier, the lawyer, the historian, the philosopher, or the poet. Shakespeare died comparatively young; but so little is known of his life, that we cannot say what his physical constitution was, or what were the causes that led to his removal from the world, at an age when he ought to have been in the full use of all his intellectual and bodily faculties. Burns and Byron died at an age still earlier, and in the very flower and bloom of their manhood, from causes with which hard intellectual labour had nothing whatever to do, and which the world knows too well to render a reminder necessary. Sir Walter Scott, at the age of sixty-one, died not from overwork—though few men ever worked so hard—but from mental distress caused by his pecuniary misfortunes. Voltaire, a very giant for labour, and whose works in almost every department of literature fill a considerable library, died an octogenarian. Goethe long exceeded the three score years and ten. Sir Isaac Newton, to whom the hardest work was amusement, Immanuel Kant, who had the same healthy stamina of mind, William Wordsworth, and Walter Savage Landor, who all exercised their intellects without stint or weariness, and with the serene regularity which we may imagine in a planet rolling and rolling, unceasing and unceasing in its appointed course, either reached or exceeded four score. Doctor James Copland, the author of that most laborious and comprehensive

work, the *Cyclopedia of Medicine*, attained the age of seventy-nine, retaining his mental faculties clear and unclouded to the last. Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Brougham, and the great Duke of Wellington, who, as labourers in their several departments of activity, performed tasks that may be truly called herculean, were all nonagenarians; and never seemed as if time, circumstance, or duty could find them work enough to do. Wellington's despatches alone are a marvel, and a magnificent monument to his fame. And it was a characteristic of all these great men, that they did their work as if they loved it; that they never got into flurries or worries, but took the world and its business calmly. They knew their strength and never exceeded it. They knew that the body was the workmanship of God, and must be fairly treated, as became the habitation of the mind, and the only means by which mind could work, and declare itself. Healthy and clean body, healthy and clean mind, was their rule of life; and to keep the body fit for the mental work required of it, they practised all the bodily virtues comprised under the names of exercise, moderation, purity, and sufficiency of sleep and relaxation. The thinker's brain, like the blacksmith's arm or the pedestrian's foot, becomes strong in proportion to its work. The whole secret is told in the ancient fable of Iarchus, the wise physician, and his three gold rings. He taught his disciples that if they wore these rings with trusting faith, and religiously followed the precept attached to each, they would preserve the freshness and the flower of bodily and mental youth to the latest limit of man's allotted time upon the earth. Their virtues are thus set forth by a modern poet in *Studies from the Antique*; and the aptness as well as beauty of the quotation will render unnecessary any apology for its length:

Who wears the first, must keep his body pure,
From toe to crown, by daily dalliance
With cleansing waters, Heaven's most precious gift,
A duty and a luxury both in one.
Who wears the second must avoid excess
In every appetite: in food and drink,
In passion, in desire, in toil, in sleep.
Who wears the third must train himself to use
All faculties the bounteous gods bestow:
Must teach his eyes to see, his ears to hear,
His hands to toil, his feet to run and leap,
His lungs to breathe the invigorating air;
Must train his head to think, his heart to feel,
And exercise each power of life and limb
To full efficiency, nor overstretch
Even by a hair the tension of the string,
Lest it should jar and snap. Who wears the three
Shall be a perfect man, except in soul;
A physical noble—safe from all but time,
And accident, and chastening of the gods.

To this comprehensive formula need only be added the suggestive warning that nervous irritation, produced either by alcoholic intemperance, or by the deprivation of the proper and natural amount of sleep, are the main causes of the physical breakdown, too often wrongfully attributed to excessive brain work. The late Mr. Justice Willes, whose untimely end has produced so many querulous and misplaced homilies on over-mental exertion as one of the characteristics of the age, never did half as much work as Lord Brougham or Lord Lyndhurst, or as Lord Palmerston, who lived to upwards of eighty, and looked upon work as recreation. The labours so cheerfully borne by M. Thiers, at the age of seventy-five, might break down a much younger man, if the younger man was unwise enough not to take to the task easily, and deprive himself of his peaceful sleep by fretfulness and worry. Worry, not work, is the thing to be avoided by all who value health and strength, and length of happy days.

AMBER AND AMBERGRIS.

WHICH is which? Are they both alike? Is one named from the other? Does gris mean grey, and ambergris grey amber? Is the one substance, as well as the other, used for articles of ornament and personal decoration? Multitudes of persons who have never seen ambergris ask these questions, or would do so, if it were not for the foolish pride which revolts from showing one's ignorance. Again: is amber a stone, or is ambergris? Do they both grow, or does either of them; and if they grow, is it in the water or on dry land; and how do insects and bits of bone get into them?

Ambergris, to look at and handle, is a light, inflammable, greyish, variegated substance, fusible and fragrant when gently heated. It is lighter than water; its grey colour varies from yellowish to brown; it is tasteless and odourless when cold, and is something like wax in consistency; it is soluble in many acid and alkaline liquids; and it imparts, by distillation, many of its properties to tinctures, balsams, and other medicinal preparations. The substance itself was known long before its history. People found it, but they did not know how it got to the spots where it was formed. On the northern and eastern coasts of Africa, on some parts of the Mediterranean shore, in the East Indies and the West

Indies, occasionally on the west coast of Ireland, ambergris is met with—floating on the surface of the sea, adhering to rocks, or thrown upon the beach. One celebrated piece was bought by the Dutch East India Company, in 1693, from the King of Tidore, to whom they gave eleven thousand thalers for it; it was almost spherical, measured two feet in diameter, and weighed a hundred and eighty-two pounds. The Grand Duke of Tuscany offered fifty thousand crowns for it—with what result we know not. Another famous piece, found off the Cape of Good Hope, is said to have weighed no less than three hundred pounds.

Renaudot, in a translation of an Arab book of travels, notices the occurrence of ambergris on the African coast, and then says: "The inhabitants of this country have camels trained up to the business, which they mount, and go in search of ambergris by moonlight, riding for that purpose along the shore. The camels are broken in to this, and as they perceive a piece of ambergris, they bend their knees and their rider picks it up." But then comes a strange story—very like a whale! "There is another sort, which swims in great lumps upon the surface of the sea, like the body of an ox, or a little less, and weigh a great deal. When a certain fish of the whale kind, called tal, sees these floating lumps, he swallows the same, and is killed thereby. Then the whale is seen floating on the surface; and instantly the men, who are accustomed to this kind of fish, and know when these whales have swallowed ambergris, go out to him in their boats, and darting him with iron harpoons, they tow him to shore, where they split him down the back, and take out the ambergris."

Now this account, suggesting a connexion between ambergris and the whale, was corroborated to some extent by the testimony of Kämpfer, who, in his voyage to Japan, said that a good deal of ambergris was found on that coast, chiefly within the bodies of whales. Hence arose many theories to account for the origin of this singular substance. The theories were in answer to such questions as the following: Is ambergris formed on the shore, melted by the heat of the sun, floated out into the sea, swallowed by whales, and again returned by them? Does it spring from the bottom of the sea in the form of a bitumen, which gradually rises to the surface, and hardens in the sunshine? Is it a kind of sea mushroom, torn up from

the bottom by the violence of tempests? Is it a vegetable production, issuing out of the root of some tree whose roots always shoot towards the sea? Is it a species of wax or gum which distils from trees, drops into the sea, and congeals into a solid form? Is it a spongy kind of earth, washed off the rocks by the action of sea waves, and left floating on the surface? Is it mainly composed of honeycomb which falls into the sea from overhanging rocks where bees have taken up their abode? Is it a bituminous substance, which flows to the sea from the shore in a liquid form, and is there hardened and solidified? There was thus, it will be seen, no lack of ingenuity in the speculations concerning the origin of ambergris, or the theories based upon them. The bituminous hypothesis was believed to receive some support from the fact that at Madagascar, where much ambergris is found, the soil under the sea coast, and under the adjacent bed of the sea, is believed to be more or less impregnated with bitumen. Any true theory of ambergris, it was admitted, must account for the fact that the pieces are frequently composed of many strata, with pebbles and other bodies enclosed between them, and the strata sometimes full of little shells. A safe conclusion, under any hypothesis, was, that ambergris is originally in a fluid state, or at any rate sufficiently soft to envelope such small substances as fall in its way.

One by one numerous ingenious theories fell to the ground; it was seen that they would not suffice to account for the appearances presented. The whale, it was evident, must be associated with ambergris very intimately, in any explanation suited for the phenomena. When a whaling captain came from the South Seas, and brought home three hundred and sixty ounces of ambergris, which had been taken out of the body of a whale, this fact led to further inquiry, from which it appeared that the substance was contained in a little bag in the interior of the huge leviathan; lending probability to a supposition that ambergris is, in some way or other, produced within the whale. About a century and a half ago, Doctor Boylston, of Boston, wrote thus: "Our whale-fishers of Nantucket, in New England, give me the following account. On cutting up a spermaceti whale, they found in him about twenty pounds weight, more or less, of ambergris; after which, they and other such fishermen became very curious in searching all such whales as they killed; and it has since been

found in lesser quantities in several whales of that kind, and in no other. They add further, that it is contained in a cyst or bag, without any inlet or outlet to it, and that they have sometimes found the bag empty and yet entire."

These American fishermen were on the right track. The experiments and observations of naturalists have led to a pretty general opinion that ambergris, although it has its origin within the body of the whale, is not produced by the animal from any foreign source. One circumstance seems to show that it is probably the result of disease. The number of whales which contain ambergris bears but a small proportion to the whole number caught; and moreover, the whales which contain this peculiar secretion appear more weak and sickly than the generality of those captured. There are several species of whale; but it is the spermaceti kind which, so far as is known, alone yields ambergris. Nearly always small remains of whale food, hard and undigested, are found in the concretion; and no doubt is now entertained that ambergris is connected with the digestive apparatus of the sperm whale—perhaps a penalty for eating his dinner too heedlessly.

As to the designation, some languages give the name amber, or a word very similar to it, to ambergris; applying to the necklace and pipe-mouth material a very different designation. Thus, in German, our ambergris is amber, and our amber bernstein; and the word amber itself, in the form ambar, is the Arabic for ambergris. Therefore, it may be, ambergris is the real original, and amber only the owner of the name by a kind of stealth. In some dictionaries the definitions are so managed as to rest upon the distinction between yellow amber and grey amber, the latter being ambergris. There may perchance be many readers who surmise that, as amber is a material for personal ornament, ambergris in like manner occupies a place in the list. But such is not the case. Ambergris, although not exactly sticky, is squeezable, and unfitted to be wrought into definite forms. It is used in the East as an article of food, or, more correctly, as a flavouring ingredient, and an aid in cookery. A similar use of it formerly prevailed in England. There are old books in which the substance is called ambergrease, and in which it is mentioned in connexion with the rich brown gravy of roast meat, as contradistinguished from fat gravy. Milton, in his *Tempter's Feast*, speaks of—

Beasts of chase, or fowl of game
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
Gris-amber steam'd; all fish from sea or shore,
Freshet, or purling brook.

Macaulay says that, on the death of Charles the Second, rumours spread abroad to the effect that "Something had been put into his broth, something added to his favourite dish of eggs and ambergris." The substance is more generally used, however, as a pastile, or an ingredient in perfumery. Much ambergris is taken to Mecca by the Hajjis on their annual pilgrimage, probably for use in fumigating the holy places, much as frankincense is used in Catholic countries. In Europe, it is employed by perfumers in scenting pastiles, candles, wash-balls, bottles, hair-powder, &c.; while its essence, with or without the addition of musk, is mixed with powders, pastes, skin-softeners, and other of those toilet mysteries which men-folk are not permitted to inquire about too minutely.

And now for amber. The late Sir George Cornewall Lewis, a statesman whose mind was stored with a singular medley of erudite notions, ransacked ancient writers with a view of ascertaining how far amber was known in remote days. We cannot follow him in his search, but must be content with stating that, like ambergris, this substance was used long before its origin was known. The jewellers and trinket-makers of the East tempted their customers with elegant ornaments—for the person, the dress, and the table—made of a substance unlike any other in use; presenting all shades of yellow, from nearly white to almost brown, for the most part transparent when polished, though occasionally opaque or clouded; inflammable, and exhaling a white pungent aromatic smoke when burning; slightly resinous in taste and smell when cold; found in nodules or lumps from the size of a pea to that of a child's head. The well-to-do Orientals purchased their necklaces, bracelets, amulets, pipe-stems, &c., without inquiring very minutely from what source the material had been derived. Those who took interest in the matter were divided in opinion. Some supposed amber to be an animal substance resembling bees-wax, secreted by a peculiar kind of ant inhabiting pine forests. Some, thinking the vegetable kingdom to be a more probable source than the animal, regarded it as a gum which oozed out of pine-trees, and gradually solidified. A third party, looking to the mineral rather than to either of the other two kingdoms of nature, pronounced amber to be a fossil

mineral, of antediluvian origin. All, however, admitted that the theory, whichever was adopted, must be such as would explain the presence of insects, flies, bits of leaves, &c., in many of the specimens; such extraneous matters must have entered when the amber was in a viscid, if not fluid state, for the insects are, in numerous instances, preserved with all their delicate details uninjured.

Inquiry gradually led to a knowledge of the fact that amber is found in the sand and clay near sea-shores, as also exposed on the shore and near the mouths of a few large rivers. It has been found in Sicily, Poland, Saxony, Siberia, Greenland, on the coast of Yorkshire, and once in a gravel pit near Hyde Park Corner. But the great storehouse is the Baltic shore of East Prussia, in the neighbourhood of Memel, Pillau, Königsberg, and Dantzic. The usual mode of searching for it is to explore the sea-coasts after storms, when the amber is found in rounded nodules near the shore. Another mode is to wade into the sea, and scrape the sea-bed with a ring-mouthed net attached to a pole. A more hazardous method is to go out in a boat, scrape the precipitous cliffs of the coast with hooked scrapers, and examine the fragments thus brought down; pieces of amber often reward the search. There are occasions, after a storm, when much lignite is found floating on the sea, containing amber entangled among it.

Amber has quite a fancy value. Large pieces will fetch a price bearing no sort of regulated relation to that obtained for smaller specimens. A piece one pound in weight is sought after by dealers as a treasure; and when it comes to ten pounds weight (which is in rare instances the case) its price rises to thousands of pounds sterling. The largest mass at present known weighs eighteen pounds; it was found in Lithuania, and is preserved in the Royal Museum at Berlin. Some connoisseurs prefer the specimens which present a beautiful transparency of colours; others look out for those in which insects are most perfectly preserved. It is all a matter of taste. Wise men tell us, however, that we must not always rely on the genuineness of particular specimens. Artificers, whose ingenuity is in advance of their honesty, take small pieces of amber, smooth the surfaces, moisten them with linseed oil, and press them together over a charcoal fire. And the same folks know how to insinuate a tiny insect, or a fly's wing, for a possible

purchaser who is known to have a penchant for pieces of amber thus adorned. The great museum of jewels and minerals at Dresden contains many such built-up specimens. Our own British Museum contains many curious pieces of amber, enclosing insects of numerous species; while at the South Kensington Museum, and at the International Exhibition of the present year, there are numerous works of art cunningly wrought out of this substance. We will believe that these consist of real amber, and not of the gum copal which occasionally does duty as such. Veritable or factitious, the pieces of gum preserved in museums disclose plentiful bits of bees, wasps, gnats, spiders, and beetles, more or less perfect—suggesting the couplet:

The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare;
The wonder's how on earth they enter'd there.

It is no longer a wonder. All now agree that this amber is an indurated resin which oozes from old pine and fir-trees, and accumulates into nodules large or small as the case may be. The Baltic provinces are rich in the kind of trees which produce it—just as Canada is rich in the species which yield turpentine.

Amber requires to be handled with care in fabricating it into articles of ornament. In making necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets, snuff-boxes, mouth-pieces for pipes, &c., the nodules are split on a turning-lathe, smoothed into shape by whetstones, polished with chalk and water, then with vegetable oil, and completed by rubbing with flannel. Amber is one of the most electrical substances known; indeed, electricity derived its name from *elektron*, the Greek name for amber. The pieces become so hot and excited while being operated upon, that the workmen find it necessary to give them intervals of rest, or they would fly into fragments. Nay, the workmen themselves are subject to tremors; they are, in fact, electrified, without exactly knowing it. By cautious treatment, the substance can be bent into various forms while warm.

The commodity known in the trade as artificial musk is nothing more than amber dissolved into a viscid wax with nitric acid. The coarser kinds of amber, which would not be much valued in the solid state, are used in making several sorts of varnish, some of which are highly useful to coach-painters. Pharmacutists procure from it, by distillation, a volatile oil useful as an antispasmodic.

We might be tempted, by the title of this

paper, to say something about Weinhold's extraordinary story of the Amber Witch; but let it pass—amber had not so much to do with that matter as skilful writing: the attempt of a clever man to deceive clever critics into a belief that a merely invented story was really a matter of fact.

PARVA DOMUS—MAGNA QUIES.

A narrow home, but very still it seemeth;
A silent home, no stir or tumult here.
Who wins that pillow of no sorrow dreameth,
No whirling echoes jar his sealed ear;
The tired hand lies very calm and quiet,
The weary foot no more hard paths will tread,
The great world may revolve in clash and riot,
To its loud summons leaps nor heart nor head.

The violets bloom above the tranquil sleeper,
The morning dews fall gently on the grass,
Amid the daisies kneels the lonely weeper;
He knows not when her lingering footsteps pass.
The autumn winds sigh softly o'er his slumber,
The winter piles the snow-drifts o'er his rest;
He does not care the flying years to number,
The narrow home contents its silent guest.

No baffled hope can haunt, no doubt perplexes,
No parted love the deep repose can chafe,
No petty care can irk, no trouble vexes.
From misconception his hushed heart is safe,
Freed from the weariness of worldly fretting,
From pain and failure, bootless toil and strife,
From the dull wretchedness of vain regretting
He lies, whose course has passed away from life.

A narrow home, and far beyond it lieth
The land whereof no mortal lips can tell.
We strain our sad eyes as the spirit flieth,
Our fancy loves on heaven's bright hills to dwell.
God shuts the door, no angel lip uncloses;
They whom Christ raised no word of guidance said.
Only the Cross speaks where our dust reposes,
"Trust Him who calls unto his rest our dead."

THE MAN IN ARMOUR.

THAT the Age of Chivalry is gone for ever the world learnt, a good many years ago, upon the authority of Mr. Edmund Burke. The knightly pageantry, however, which was the decorative product or outward show of chivalry, survived its departure for a considerable period: just as ivy is seen to flourish, although the oak it clings to may be dead, or as a dress of rich brocade will for awhile stand erect after its wearer has ceased to animate it, and has withdrawn from its folds. Its primal worth and significance lost, chivalry yet existed upon its merits as a spectacle. It was esteemed as a valid excuse for splendour of costume, for the exhibition of gold and silver embroideries, for chain mail and burnished steel, for silken banners and heraldic insignia, for pompous music and superb processions. But this is a prosaic age, a utilitarian and a busy. Shows and

pageants are now for the most part relegated to the playhouse. They are felt to be shams, and in such wise assigned to that licensed mart and emporium of the unreal. In these times royal state appears shorn of its beams, pruned, dimmed, a shadow of its former self. The divinity that hedges a sovereign is no longer symbolised by groups of attendants gorgeously clad in mediæval raiment. Pomp, even of a modest kind, is held to be inconvenient, obstructive, and somehow ludicrous. Even our King of Cockaigne—the Lord Mayor—great conservator and representative of old customs and traditions though he be, now performs his annual pilgrimage to Westminster with reduced retinue and diminished solemnity. Once he ventured so far as to discard his state coach, shrewdly suspicious, perhaps, that ridicule rather than respect attached to that magnificent but cumbrous vehicle. On this head, however, he was judged to be, for a Lord Mayor, too much in advance of the current of public opinion. His reform was accounted suicidal. It was perceived that if the state coach were to be driven to limbo, there was real danger lest the civic potentate himself should be constrained to be its inside passenger on that lethal journey. The fates of the man and the conveyance were bound up together, and conterminat. If the laws of strict reason and common sense were to be invoked, then the mayor could as easily be dispensed with as his state coach. So the gilded carriage still travels westward every year, jolting and rolling uneasily on its way like a clumsy or even a tipsy monarch, whose progress is much incommoded by the excess of his trappings, or the surplusage of his train. But for many Novembers the Lord Mayor has eliminated from his procession that spectacular joy of past years, that last remnant of the departed age of chivalry, the Man in Armour. Never more, it would seem, is that warrior in complete steel or polished brass to illumine the fog of Cheapside, or amaze the approaches to Westminster. He was a strange apparition even in that pageant of curious figures, that gathering of mystic beadles, marshals, watermen, longshoremen, and other ambiguous functionaries which deck a Lord Mayor's triumph; he was out of place, somehow, jostled by the modern hussar on the one hand, and the still more modern police constable on the other; and he was the subject of some derision, which yet boasted an affectionate and admiring leaven on the part of the populace. When

his place knew him no more he was certainly missed. It was felt by many that a better institution could better have been spared. His abolition was the severest blow yet dealt to civic authority. He was, in his way, a grand creature.

The City had but followed, after a considerable interval, the example of the Crown. The royal man in armour was seen in public for the last time on the 19th of July, 1821, at the coronation of King George the Fourth. In the ceremonies attending later enthronements the champion was permitted no part. The public banquet of the sovereign in Westminster Hall was dispensed with, and the presence of the champion, mounted on a white horse, and clothed in complete armour, to deliver his challenge shortly before the serving of the second course, was held to be unnecessary. The holder of the office was rewarded by Lord Melbourne, in 1841, with a baronetcy: in consideration, it was understood, of his having waived his lawful claim to figure as a knight in armour at the coronation of Queen Victoria. The championship, it may be noted, is an hereditary post of great antiquity, annexed to the feudal manor of Scrivelsby, near Horncastle, in Lincolnshire, and has descended in the house of Dymoke for many generations. The estate was anciently vested in the Marmion family, said to have been hereditary champions to the Dukes of Normandy long prior to the Norman conquest. Upon the death of Philip de Marmion, without male issue, in the reign of Edward the First, the manor of Scrivelsby became the property of his younger daughter. By marriage with her heiress Margaret, Sir John Dymoke acquired the estate and the hereditary office, and duly performed the duties of champion at the coronation of Richard the Second. Since then, and to the date of his last appearance in public, the royal man in armour has always been a Dymoke. George the Fourth's champion was allowed to act by deputy, however. The Reverend John Dymoke, owner and rector of Scrivelsby, and prebendary of Lincoln Cathedral, pleaded his clerical character when called upon to deliver the customary challenge. Upon his petition to the Court of Claims, a tribunal constituted on the eve of every coronation to dispose of such matters, his son was permitted to act on his behalf.

Haydon chronicles in his diary the last ride of the royal champion in Westminster Hall. Court dress was indispensable on

the august occasion, and the painter, with a view to his becoming appearance, had to levy contributions upon his friends, a proceeding far from unusual with him. "Sir George Beaumont," he writes, "lent me ruffles and a frill; another friend a blue velvet coat; a third a sword—the rest I had." He was at the door of Westminster Hall at half-past one in the morning, obtained admission about four, and promptly secured a front place in the chamberlain's box. "Many of the door-keepers were tipsy; quarrels took place. The sun began to light up the old Gothic windows, the peers to stroll in, and other company of all descriptions to crowd to their places." He describes admirably the whole gorgeous ceremonial, the imposing procession, the blare of the trumpets, the distant shouts of the crowd without, and the entrance of the king. "Something rustles, and a being, buried in satin, feathers, and diamonds, rolls gracefully into his seat. The room rises with a sort of feathered, silken thunder." The king withdraws to the Abbey, and after two or three hours returns to the hall, "crowned, and under a golden canopy. The banquet over, came the most imposing scene of all—the championship. . . . Wellington, in his coronet, walked down the hall, cheered by the officers of the Guards. He returned shortly, mounted, with Lords Howard and Anglesea. They rode gracefully to the foot of the throne, and then backed out. Lord Anglesea's horse was restive. Wellington became impatient, and, I am convinced, thought it a trick of Lord Anglesea's to attract attention. He never paused, but backed on, and the rest were obliged to follow him. This was a touch of character. The hall-doors opened again, and outside, in twilight, a man in dark shadowed armour appeared against the shining sky. He then moved, passed into darkness under the arch, and suddenly Wellington, Howard, and the champion stood in full view, with the doors closed behind them. This was certainly the finest sight of the day. The herald read the challenge; the glove was thrown down. They all then proceeded to the throne. My imagination got so intoxicated that I came out with a great contempt for the plebs, and as I walked by with my sword I indulged myself in an *odi profanum*!" He had forgotten by this time that his sword and other finery had been merely borrowed. He concludes characteristically, "How soon should I be ruined in luxurious society!"

The coronation of George the Fourth was a copy, with perhaps increased magnificence, of the forms and ceremonies observed upon the enthronement of his father, George the Third, in 1761. This followed hard upon the royal wedding, and the two events appear to have had a very intoxicating effect upon all concerned. Walpole wrote to his friend George Montagu: "All the wines of Bordeaux, and all the fumes of Irish brains, cannot make a town so drunk as a royal wedding and coronation. I am going to let London cool, and will not venture into it again this fortnight. Oh, the buzz, the prattle, the crowds, the noise, the hurry! . . . For the coronation, if a puppet-show could be worth a million, that is. The multitudes, balconies, guards, and processions, made Palace-yard the liveliest spectacle in the world; the hall was the most glorious. The blaze of lights, the richness and variety of habits, the ceremonial, the benches of the peers and peeresses, frequent and full, was as awful as a pageant can be; and yet for the king's sake, and mine own, I never wish to see another. . . . The champion acted his part admirably, and dashed down his gauntlet with proud defiance. His associates, Lord Effingham, Lord Talbot, and the Duke of Bedford, were woeful; Lord Talbot (the Lord High Steward) piqued himself on backing his horse down the hall, and not turning its tail towards the king; but he had taken such pains to drill it to that duty that it entered backwards; and at his retreat the spectators clapped. A terrible indecorum, but suitable to such Bartholomew Fair doings."

This backing of their horses, in a literal, not a sporting sense, by the champion and his companions, seems to have been a matter anxiously considered at the time. What may be called a dressed rehearsal of this part of the ceremony took place in Westminster Hall some few days previous to the coronation, to insure complete performance on the part of both men and horses. In the Public Advertiser of September 19th, 1761, appeared this curious paragraph: "Last night Westminster Hall was illuminated, and John Dymoke, Esq., put on his armour and tried a grey horse, which his late majesty rode at the battle of Dettingen, before His Royal Highness the Duke of York, Prince Henry Frederick, the Duke of Devonshire, Earl Talbot, and many other persons of distinction. There were also another grey and four other horses, which were walked and rode several

times up and down the hall. Earl Talbot rode one of them, a very fine brown bay horse, which his lordship proposes to ride on the side of the champion on the coronation day." This must have been the steed of which Walpole makes mention, which learnt its duties too well, or like an actor over-anxious to arrive at the most important scenes of his performance, missed its cues and "entered backwards." It is to be observed that if the champion really bestrode the charger which bore King George the Second at Dettingen, his "mount" had certainly arrived at years of discretion; for Dettingen was fought in 1743. The horse was then probably a youthful creature, for it ran away with its august rider, and with difficulty was stayed from carrying him into the enemy's lines. It is well known that the king was forced to descend from the impetuous animal, and that crying bravely, "Now I know I shall not run away," he drew his sword, placed himself at the head of his foot-guards, and in imperfect English, but with abundant spirit, urged them to follow his lead and attack the foe. Eighteen years had probably tamed the fire of this charger of King George's; at any rate there is no record that at his grandson's coronation there was any misconduct on the part of the horse ridden by the royal man in armour.

Was it, as a measure of economy, that so old a steed was allotted to Mr. Dymoke upon this solemn occasion? Possibly. The Dettingen charger could have been but of small value in 1761. The champion had his fees or perquisites due upon the performance of his functions. By prescriptive right he was entitled to "one of the king's great coursers, with the saddle, harness, and trappings of cloth of gold; one of the king's best suits of armour with cases of cloth of gold; and all other things belonging to the king's body when he goes into mortal battle; and the gold cup in which the king drinks to him, with its cover." The arms provided for the royal champion at the coronation of King James the Second in 1685, are very particularly enumerated. "A complete suit of white armour, a pair of gauntlets, a sword and hanger, a case of rich pistols, an oval shield with the champion's arms painted on it, and a gilded lance fringed about the handles. Also a field saddle of crimson velvet with breast-plate and other caparisons for the horse, richly laden with gold and silver, a plume of red, white, and blue feathers, consisting of eighteen falls and a heron's top, another

plume for the horse's head, and trumpet banners with the champion's own arms depicted on them." All this magnificence was the lawful fee of the champion, upon the understanding, however, that certain compensation money would be allowed upon re-delivery of the property to the Master of the Royal Armoury for the time being.

The champion's cup receives particular mention from Mr. Pepys in his account of the coronation of Charles the Second, and the banquet in Westminster Hall. "I went out a little while before the king had done all his ceremonies, and went round the Abbey to Westminster Hall, all the way within rayles and ten thousand people, with the ground covered with blue cloth; and scaffolds all the way. Into the hall I got, where it was very fine with hangings and scaffolds one upon another, full of brave ladies; and my wife in one little one on the right hand. . . . And the king came in with his crown on, and his sceptre in his hand, under a canopy borne up by six silver staves, carried by Barons of the Cinque Ports, and little bells at every end. And after a long time he got up to the further end, and all set themselves down at their several tables; and that was also a brave sight; and the king's first course carried up by the Knights of the Bath. And many fine ceremonies there was of the heralds leading up people before him and bowing; and my Lord of Albemarle's going to the kitchen and eating a bit of the first dish that was to go to the king's table. But above all was these three lords, Northumberland, and Suffolk, and the Duke of Ormond, coming before the courses on horseback, and staying so all dinner time, and at last bringing up the king's champion, all in armour, on horseback, with his spear and target carried before him. And a herald proclaims, 'That if any dare deny Charles Stuart to be lawful King of England, here was a champion that would fight with him;' and with these words the champion flings down his gauntlet, and all this he do three times in his going up towards the king's table. To which when he is come, the king drinks to him, and then sends him the cup, which is of gold, and he drinks it off, and then rides back again with the cup in his hand. I went from table to table to see the bishops and all other at their dinners, and was infinitely pleased with it," &c. It seems that the champion's cup was not of gold, however, the Court of Claims having decided, "the word in the record being d'orie," that the

cup could not be otherwise than gilt. At the coronation of William and Mary, the champion claimed as his fee two cups, "because his service was now double, for he was to maintain by battle the titles of the king and queen." The court, however, by its judgment bade him be content with one cup. A curious claim for "twenty yards of crimson satin" was disallowed by the Court of Claims appointed at the coronation of James the Second. The claim, it seems, had not been made by the champion's ancestor at the last coronation, and he now "showed nothing to make good his pretensions thereto." What could the man in armour want with these yards of satin?

The champion long continued to be an esteemed figure in the coronation pageant, not merely because of his individual splendour, but by reason of a popular belief that claimants to the crown, in person or by their adherents, would surely avail themselves of the opportunity offered to assert what they held to be their rights, lest judgment should go against them, as it were, by default. Possibly many spectators were in hopes that a mortal combat would really ensue upon the delivery of the champion's challenge. At least it was expected that his gauntlet would be lifted up, or another glove flung down beside it. But coronations have always furnished food to the credulous and imaginative; signs and portents have invariably been looked for on such occasions. A heavy storm on the evening of Charles the Second's coronation brought distress of mind to many. "Strange it is to think," writes Pepys, "that these two days have held up fair till now that all is done, and the king gone out of the hall, and then it fell a raining and thundering and lightening as I have not seen it do for some years; which people did take great notice of; God's blessing of the work of these two days, which is a foolery to take too much notice of such things." Aubrey observes: "King Charles was crowned at the very conjunction of the sun and Mercury; Mercury being then in corde solis. As the king was at dinner in Westminster Hall, it thundered and lightened extremely. The cannons and the thunder played together." And Baxter, in his *Life*, makes mention of the storm on Charles the Second's coronation day with reference to a portent of earlier date: "There was very terrible thunders when none expected it, which made me remember his father's coronation, on which, being a boy at school, and having leave to play for

the solemnity, an earthquake, about two o'clock in the afternoon, did affright the boys and all the neighbourhood. I intend no commentary on these, but only to relate the matter of fact."

Supply is ruled by demand, and credulity generates fables. There is no lack of stories setting forth the acceptance of the champion's challenge. Miss Strickland, in her *Life of Queen Mary the Second*, refers to a "gossip's tale" of this matter as associated with every coronation of the last century, which took place while an heir of James the Second existed. A woman is usually described as pushing her way through the crowd, taking up the champion's gauntlet, and leaving her own glove in its place. Sometimes the woman is said to be old and infirm, supported by crutches; then she is declared to be young and beautiful; while one version of the story has it that the Pretender himself, disguised in female attire, accomplished the daring feat. It may be remembered that in his novel of *Redgauntlet*, Sir Walter Scott has availed himself of this curious legend, applying it to the coronation of George the Third, and apparently unaware that it had been referred to previous coronations. Obedient to the command of her uncle, Redgauntlet, Lillias, the heroine of the novel, upon the third sounding of the champion's challenge, rushes through the crowd, a lane being opened for her as though by word of command, picks up "the parader's gage," and leaves another in lieu of it. "I have often heard," says Darsie Latimer, to whom she relates her adventure, "that a female, supposed to be a man in disguise—and yet, Lillias, you do not look very masculine—had lifted up the champion's gauntlet at the present king's coronation, and left in its place a gage of battle with a paper, offering to accept the combat, 'provided a fair field should be allowed for it. I have hitherto considered it as an idle tale. I have little thought how nearly I was interested in the actors of a scene so daring.'" In a note Sir Walter apologises for what might be considered a violent infraction of probability in this exploit of his heroine's, and urges tradition "which many people may recollect having heard" as his excuse. He is disposed to regard the story, however, as one of the numerous fictions which were circulated from time to time to keep up the spirits of a sinking faction.

The presence of the Young Pretender in disguise at the coronation of George the

Third may perhaps also be accounted a fable of similar nature and object. But the legend long enjoyed credence, and was even supported by some show of evidence. David Hume, writing to Sir John Pringle upon the subject, says, "You see this story is so nearly traced from the fountain-head as to wear a good deal of probability." Further he inquires, "What if the Pretender had taken up Dymoke's gauntlet?" And Horace Walpole, in a letter to Miss Berry in 1791, writes: "Madame d'Albany. . . chose to go to see the king in the House of Lords, with the crown on his head, prostrating the parliament. What an odd encounter. Was it philosophy or insensibility? I believe it is certain that her husband was in Westminster Hall at the coronation."

To the Lord Mayor's man in armour no historical value or interest attaches. He was not required to deliver a challenge on behalf of his civic superior, or to fulfil other knightly duties than were comprised in wearing his mail suit with such ease and grace as might be, in keeping his seat on horseback, and in lending to the annual procession the lustre of his presence. Compared with the royal champion he was but as a street performer by the side of a leading actor at a patent theatre. His exhibition was presented in the open air, and had to be accomplished let the November weather be what it would. His office was not hereditary; he had probably no pedigree to boast of, and no golden cup or other splendid perquisites rewarded his labours. Some few shillings, perhaps, were deemed sufficient recompense for his share in the show. And then the royal champion was prized by reason of the rarity of his appearance; he was to be seen only at coronations, spectacles that a man could reasonably expect to witness but once or twice in his lifetime. Whereas the City man in armour bloomed not at long intervals, like an aloe, but annually with the chrysanthemum, and in such wise came to be popularly classed among other street shows, such as the May-day sweeps, the charity children upon Ascension Day, and the effigies of Guy Fawkes. And, resplendent and gorgeous as he was, a certain histrionic suspicion clove to his aspect. He seemed to have recently escaped from the footlights. The glow of rouge was oftentimes discernible upon his cheeks, and his moustaches were frequently mere streakings of burnt cork. He might fairly have been taken for a theatrical supernumerary temporarily en-

listed in the service of the Lord Mayor. Even his suit of burnished mail, though generally understood to be kindly lent for the occasion by the custodian of the Tower armoury, seems now and then to have been borrowed from the playhouse. Possibly for the reason that the imitation accoutrements were more showy and superb than the real.

This was at any rate the case in 1811, when Sir Claudius Hunter was Lord Mayor, and Mr. Elliston was manager of the Surrey Theatre. A melodramatic play was in preparation, and for this the manager had provided, at considerable outlay, two magnificent suits of brass and steel armour of the fourteenth century, expressly manufactured by Mr. Marriott, of Fleet-street. No expense had been spared in rendering this harness as complete and splendid as could be. Forthwith Sir Claudius applied to Elliston for the loan of the new armour to enhance the glories of the civic pageant. The request was acceded to with a proviso that the suit of steel could only be lent in the event of the ensuing 9th of November proving free from damp and fog. No such condition, however, was annexed to the loan of the brass armour; and it was understood that Mr. John Kemble had kindly undertaken to furnish the helmets of the knights with costly plumes, and personally to superintend the arrangement of these decorations. Altogether it would seem that the mayor stood much indebted to the managers, who, willing to oblige, yet felt that their courtesy was deserving of some sort of public recognition. At least this was Elliston's view of the matter, who read with chagrin sundry newspaper paragraphs, announcing that at the approaching inauguration of Sir Claudius, some of the royal armour from the Tower would be exhibited, but ignoring altogether the loan of the matchless suits of steel and brass from the Surrey Theatre. The manager was mortified; he could be generous, but he knew the worth of an advertisement. He expostulated with the future mayor. Sir Claudius replied that he did not desire to conceal the transaction, but rather than it should go forth to the world that so high a functionary as an alderman of London had made a request to a theatrical manager, he thought it advisable to inform the public that Mr. Elliston had offered the use of his property for the procession of the ninth. This was hardly a fair way of stating the case, but at length the following paragraph, drawn up by Elliston, was agreed upon for publication in the newspapers:

"We understand that Mr. Elliston has lent to the Lord Mayor elect the two magnificent suits of armour, one of steel and the other of brass, manufactured by Marriott of Fleet-street, and which cost not less than six hundred pounds. These very curious specimens of the revival of an art supposed to have been lost will be displayed in the Lord Mayor's procession, and afterwards in Guildhall, with some of the royal armour in the Tower." It would seem also that the wearers of the armour were members of the Surrey company.

On the ninth, Elliston was absent from London, but he received from one left in charge of his interests a particular account of the proceedings of the day.

"The unhandsome conduct of the Lord Mayor has occasioned me much trouble, and will give you equal displeasure. In the first place your paragraph never would have appeared at all had I not interfered in the matter; secondly, cropped-tailed hacks had been procured without housings, so that I was compelled to obtain two trumpeters' horses, from the Horse Guards, long-tailed animals, and richly caparisoned; thirdly, the helmets which had been delivered at Mr. Kemble's house, were not returned until twelve o'clock on the day of action, with three miserable feathers in each, which appeared to have been plucked from the drabble tail of a hunted cock; this I also remedied by sending off at the last moment to the first plumasier, for the hire of proper feathers, and the helmets were ultimately decorated with fourteen superb plumes; fourthly, the Lord Mayor's officer, who rode in Henry the Fifth armour, jealous of our stately aspect, attempted to seize one of our horses, on which your rider made as gallant a retort as ever knight in armour could have done, and the assailer was completely foiled."

The narrator makes further revelation of the behind-the-scenes secrets of a civic pageant sixty years ago. On the arrival of the procession it was found that no accommodation had been arranged for "Mr. Elliston's men," nor were any refreshments proffered them. "For seven hours they were kept within Guildhall, where they seem to have been considered as much removed from the necessities of the flesh as Gog and Magog above their heads." At length the compassion, or perhaps the sense of humour of certain of the diners, was moved by the forlorn situation of the knights in armour, and bumpers of wine were tendered them. The man in steel

discreetly declined this hospitable offer, alleging that after so long a fast he feared the wine would affect him injuriously. It was whispered that his harness prisoned him so completely that eating and drinking were alike impracticable to him. His comrade in brass made light of these objections, gladly took the proffered cup into his gauntleted hands, and "drank the red wine through the helmet barred," as though he had been one of the famous knights of Branksome Tower. It was soon apparent that the man in brass was intoxicated. He became obstreperous; he began to reel and stumble, accounted as he was, to the hazard of his own bones and to the great dismay of bystanders. It was felt that his fall might entail disaster upon many. Attempts were made to remove him, when he assumed a pugilistic attitude, and resolutely declined to quit the hall. The man in steel sided with the man in brass. They were only overcome at last by the onset of numbers. The scene altogether was of a most scandalous, if comical, description. It was past midnight when Mr. Marriott, the armourer, arrived at Guildhall, and succeeded in releasing the two half-dead warriors from their coats of mail.

After all, these famous suits of armour never returned to the wardrobe of the Surrey Theatre, or gleamed upon its stage; from Guildhall they were taken to Mr. Marriott's workshop. This, with all its contents, was accidentally consumed by fire. But the armourer's trade had taught him chivalry. At his own expense, although he had lost some three thousands pounds by the fire, he provided Elliston with new suits of armour in lieu of those that had been destroyed. To his outlay the Lord Mayor and the city authorities contributed—nothing; although but for the procession of the 9th of November the armour had never been in peril.

THE YELLOW FLAG.

By EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VI. THOU ART THE MAN.

HUMPHREY STATHAM looked up from his writing in astonishment at the sight of his friend.

"Why Martin," he cried rising and extending his hand, "this is an unexpected pleasure. I thought I might have a line from you some time during the day, but I

never anticipated that the letter which I sent you would have the effect of drawing you from your peaceful retreat, more especially, as in your last you spoke so strongly in praise of your tranquil existence, as contrasted with the excitement and worry here."

Martin Gurwood recollected that letter. It was written but a few days previously, when his hopes of winning Alice were at their highest, before this element of discord, this stranger of whose presence Statham had warned him, had come into the field. In his friend's remark, however, Martin found something which instinctively set him on his guard. It would not do, he thought, to let it be seen how acute was his interest in the subject on which Statham had written to him; mere friendship, mere regard for Alice's welfare would have contented itself with some far less active demonstration, and, though there was no reason that he knew of for concealing the state of his feelings from his friend, as he had hitherto kept them to himself, he thought it was better not to parade them until some more fitting opportunity.

So with something like a blush, for the smallest prevarication was strange to him, Martin said: "You must not look upon your spells as so potent, my dear friend; the same post which brought me your letter brought me one from my mother, requesting an immediate decision on a matter which has been for some time in abeyance, and as this rendered it necessary for me to come to town, I took advantage of the opportunity to drop in upon you."

"I am too well pleased to see you to ask what has brought you here," said Humphrey, with a smile, "and am grateful to Mrs. Calverley for her maternal despotism. And now tell me, what did you think of the news I sent you?"

In spite of the strong effort to the contrary, the flush rose in Martin's cheeks, contrasting ill with the assumed calmness of manner with which he said, "I hear it with great regret."

"By Jove, Martin, regret is a mild term to express the feeling with which I am inspired in this matter," said Humphrey Statham, vigorously. "You have seen nothing of what has been going on, nor do I think it likely that with your ignorance of the world and its ways you would have been able to understand it if you had; but I think it desirable that you, whom we have all tacitly placed in the position of Alice's—of Mrs. Claxton's—guardian, should take some immediate action."

Martin coloured afresh. "This—this gentleman," he said.

"Do not misuse a good word," said Statham, interrupting him. "Henrich Wetter, the person of whom we are speaking, is by no means a gentleman in any sense of the term. He is a sharp, shrewd, clever knave, always keeping within the limits of the law, but within those limits thoroughly unscrupulous. He is good-looking, too, and wonderfully plausible; a more undesirable visitor for our friend in Pollington-terrace could scarcely be imagined!"

"And yet he is a cousin of Madame Du Tertre's, and came there through her introduction, I thought you said," remarked Martin.

"Yes," said Humphrey, with some hesitation; "that is a part of the business which I don't quite clearly understand, and on which I have my doubts. There is one thing, however, certain; that is, that he is there very frequently, and that it is advisable he should have a hint to discontinue his visits."

"And by whom is that hint to be given to him?"

"Of course by Mrs. Claxton. But if her ignorance of the ways of the world prevents her from seeing the necessity of taking such a step, that necessity should be made clear by some one who has the right of advising her. In point of fact—by you!"

"It is my ignorance of the ways of the world upon which you were speaking just now," said Martin, with a half-smile.

"And no one could have a finer theme on which to discourse; but in certain matters you are good enough to be guided by me."

"And you say that——"

"I say," interrupted Humphrey Statham with vehemence, "that Mr. Henrich Wetter is the last man who should be on intimate visiting terms at Mrs. Claxton's house. He is known not merely to have, but to boast of a certain unenviable reputation, which, notwithstanding his undoubted leading position in the business world, causes him to be shunned socially by those who value the fair fame of their womankind."

"This is bad hearing, indeed," said Martin Gurwood, nervously.

"Bad hearing," interrupted Statham, emphasising his remark with outstretched hand, "for any one to whom Alice is—I mean to say for any one who has Mrs. Clax-

ton's interest at heart, it is, indeed, bad hearing."

Something in the tone of Humphrey Statham's voice, something in the unusually earnest expression of his face, caused Martin to keep his eyes fixed upon his friend with peculiar intensity. What was the reason of the thrill which passed through him as Humphrey had stumbled at the mention of Alice's name? What revelation to sting and overwhelm him was about to be made by the man whose placid and unruffled nature he had often envied, whose heart he had always regarded as a part of his anatomy which did its work well, beating, indeed, warmly for his friends, but otherwise giving him little or no trouble.

Humphrey Statham did not keep him very long in suspense. "Look here, Martin," said he, "if you were to tell the people at Lloyd's, that I, Humphrey Statham, of Change-alley, was in some respects a fatalist, they would surely laugh at you, and tell you that fatalism and marine insurance did not go very well together. And yet it is to a certain extent the fact. Your arrival here this morning was no chance work, the spirit which prompted you to answer my appeal in person instead of by letter was— There, don't laugh at me—I felt it when I saw you enter the room, and determined on my course of action, determined on making a clean breast of it, and telling my old friend what I have for some time now been wearing in my heart of hearts."

He paused as though expecting his companion to make some remark. But Martin Gurwood sat silent, merely inclining his head, with his hands nervously clutching at the table before him.

"I hardly know how to tell you, after all," said Humphrey, with something like a blush on such portions of his cheeks as his beard left uncovered, "and you do not give a fellow the slightest help. You will think it strange in me, queer, odd sort of fish that I am, having lived for so many years—for all my life as far as you know—a solitary, self-contained, oyster-like existence, to acknowledge that I am as vulnerable as other men. But it is so; and on the principle of there being no fool like an old fool, I imagine that my hurt is deeper and more deadly than in ninety-nine other cases. No need to beat about the bush any longer, Martin; I tell you, as my old friend, that I am in love with Alice Claxton!"

Martin Gurwood started. From the time that Humphrey commenced to hesitate, a

strange expression had crept over the face of his friend listening to him, but he was so unwrapped in the exposition of his own feelings that he scarcely noticed it.

"You—Humphrey Statham—in love with Alice Claxton?"

"Yes, I! I, whom every one had supposed to be so absorbed in business as to have no time, no care for what my City friends would doubtless look upon as sentimental nonsense! I knew better than that myself; I knew that my heart had by nature been created capable of feeling love—I knew that from experience, Martin—but I thought that the power of loving had died out, never to come again. I was wrong. It has come again, thank Heaven! Never in my life have I been under the influence of a feeling so deep, so true and tender, as that which I have for Alice Claxton."

As Humphrey ceased speaking, Mr. Collins put his head into the room and told his chief that Mr. Brevoort was in his carriage at the end of the court, and desired to see him. In an instant Humphrey resumed his business-like manner.

"Excuse me an instant, Martin; Mr. Brevoort is half paralysed and cannot leave his carriage, so I must go to him. I shall be back in five minutes. Wait here and think over what I have just said to you! Now, Collins!" And he was gone.

Think over what had just been said to him! Martin Gurwood could do that without a second bidding. The words were ringing in his ears, the sense they conveyed seemed clogging and deadening his brain. Humphrey Statham in love with Alice Claxton—with his Alice—with the woman whom he had come to look upon as his own, and in whose sweet companionship he had fondly hoped to pass the remainder of his life. Her attraction must be great indeed if she could win the affections of such a man as Statham, calm, shrewd, and practical, not likely to be influenced merely by a pretty face or an interesting manner. The news came upon Martin like a thunderbolt! In all the long hours which he had devoted to the consideration of his love for Alice, to self-probing and examination, the idea of any rivalry had never entered into his mind. It was not that he had imagined himself secure, owing to Alice's secluded life or peculiar position; the idea had never crossed his mind. She was there, and he loved her, that was all he knew. Something like a pang of jealousy, indeed, he experienced on reading Humphrey's letter, telling of Mr. Henrich Wet-

ter's visits to Pollington-terrace; but that, though it had the effect of inducing him to start for London, was but a temporary trouble. He had guessed from what Humphrey wrote, he was sure from what Humphrey said, that this Wetter was not the style of man to captivate a woman of Alice's refinement; and he felt that the principal reason for putting a stop to his visits would be to prevent any chance of Alice's exposure to annoyance or insult.

But what he had just heard placed matters in a very different light. Here was Humphrey Statham avowing his love for Alice; Humphrey, his own familiar friend, whom he had consulted in his trouble when the story of the Claxton mystery was first revealed to him by Doctor Haughton. Humphrey, who had been the first to see Alice with a view of opening negotiations with her at the time when they so misjudged her real character and position, and who, as Martin well recollected, was even then impressed with her beauty and her modesty, and returned to fight her battles with him. Yes, Humphrey Statham had been her first champion, but that was no reason he should be her last. That gave him no monopoly of right to love and tend her. Was there any baseness, any treachery, Martin wondered, in his still cherishing his own feelings towards Alice after having heard his friend's confession? Let him think it out then and there, for that was the crowning moment of his life.

He sat there for some minutes, his head bowed, his hands clasped together on his knees. All that he had gone through since he first heard in the drawing-room at Great Walpole-street the true story of John Calverley's death, his first feelings of repulsion and aversion to the woman whom he believed to have been the bane of his mother's life, his colloquies with Statham, his first visit to Hendon, his meeting with Pauline, and their plot for keeping Alice in ignorance of the fact that the funeral had taken place, all this passed through Martin Gurwood's mind during his reverie. Passed through his mind also a recollection of the gradual manner in which he softened to the heart-broken, friendless girl, recognising her as the victim instead of the betrayer, and finding in her qualities which were rare amongst those of her sex who stood foremost and fearless in the approbation of the world. Was the day-dream in which he had of late permitted himself to indulge to vanish in this way? Was he to give up the one great hope of gladdening his life, the mere anti-

cipation of which seemed to have changed the current of his being? No! That was his determination! Humphrey Statham was the best, the truest, the dearest fellow in the world, but this was almost a matter of life and death, in which no question of sentimental friendship should have weight. He would tell Humphrey frankly and squarely what were his own feelings for Alice Claxton, and they would go in then, in rancourless rivalry, each to do his best to win her. And as he arrived at this decision, the door opened and Humphrey Statham returned.

"Well," he cried, running up in his boisterous way with outstretched hands, "you have been lost in reflection, I suppose, chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy! Not bitter though, I hope; there is no bitterness to you, Martin, in my avowal, nor to any one else, I fancy, for the matter of that, unless it be that precious article, Mr. Wetter!"

"I have been thinking over what you told me, Humphrey, and I was going to——"

"No, no, not yet. I haven't told you half I have to say," interrupted Statham, pushing his friend back into his chair, and seating himself. "Of course you're astonished, living the life you do—'celibate as a fly in the heart of an apple,' as Jeremy Taylor has it—at any one's falling in love, and at me more than any one else. You think I am not formed for that sort of thing, that I am hard, and cold, and practical, and that I have been so all my life. You little dream, Martin, for I have never said a word about it even to you, that some years ago I was so devoted to a woman as to be nearly heart-broken when she abandoned me."

"Abandoned you!"

"Yes." He shuddered, and passed his hand across his face. "I don't like to think about it even now, and should not recur to it if the circumstances had not a connexion with Alice Claxton."

"With Alice," exclaimed Martin, and bending forward eagerly.

"Yes. I must tell you the whole story, or you will not understand it, but I will tell it shortly. Some years ago, down in the North, I fell in love with a pretty girl below my own station in life. I pursued the acquaintance, and speedily let her know the state of my feelings towards her. Not, as you will readily understand, with any base motives, for I never, thank Heaven, had any desire to play the Don Juan——"

What's the matter, Martin? How white you look! Are you faint?"

"A little faint—thank you, it's quite over now! You were saying——"

"I was going to say that I meant fairly and honourably by this girl. I was not able to marry her immediately, however. I was poor then, and her friends insisted, rightly enough, that I should show I was able to maintain her. I worked hard to that end," said Humphrey, after a short pause, "but when I went down in triumph to claim her, I found she had fled from Headingly."

"From where?" cried Martin, starting forward.

"Headingly, near Leeds; that was where she lived. She had fled away from there no one knew whither. A week before I reached the place she was missed, had vanished, leaving no letter of explanation, no trace of the route she had taken. And I never saw her more."

He paused again, but Martin Gurwood spoke not, bending forward still with his eyes fixed upon his friend.

"Poor girl, poor darling girl!" muttered Humphrey, as though communing with himself. "What an awful fate for one so young and pretty."

"What fate?" cried Martin Gurwood. "Where is she now?"

"Dead!" said Humphrey Statham, solemnly. "Found killed by cold and hunger, with her baby on her breast! It seems that my poor Emily, deserted by the scoundrel who had taken her away—may the eternal——"

"Stay!" interrupted Martin Gurwood, wildly throwing up his arms. "Stay! For mercy's sake do not add your curses to the torture which I have been suffering under for years, and which culminates in this moment!"

"You!" said Humphrey, starting back. "You! Are you mad?"

"I would to Heaven I were, I would to Heaven I had been, for I should have had some excuse! The girl you speak of was called Emily Mitchell. I was the man who entrapped her from Headingly; I was the man who ruined her, body and soul!"

Humphrey Statham fell back in his chair. His lips parted, but no sound came from them.

"It is right that you should hear all now," said Martin, in a dull, low tone, "though until this instant I never knew who was the man whom I had wronged so deeply; never, of course, suspected it was you. She told me that there was a gentleman far above her station in life who intended to marry her, but she never mentioned his name. I was on a visit to a college friend when I first saw Emily, and fell in love with her. I had no evil intentions then, but the thing went on from bad to worse, until I persuaded her to elope with me. Ah, my God," he cried wildly, "bear witness to the one long protracted torture which my subsequent life has been, to the struggles which I have made to shake off the hypocrisy and deceit under whose dominion I have lived, and to stand confessed as the meanest of Thy creatures! Bear witness to these, and let them plead for me!"

Then he flung himself forward on the desk, and buried his face in his hands. There came a knock at the door. Humphrey Statham, all horror-stricken as he was, rushed forward to prevent any intrusion. But he was too late, the door opened quickly, and Pauline entered the room.

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